

Influenza Activity in Kansas as of January 29, 2004

The latest flu report from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment for the week ending January 24, 2004 (week 3) classifies flu activity in the state as "Local." The classification is based on a report of increased influenza-like illness (ILI) in one public health region and recent lab confirmed influenza in the effected area. This is the third week at this influenza activity level since the week ending November 22, 2003 (week 48) Kansas reported "Widespread" activity in weeks 50 and 51 (weeks ending December 13 and 20, 2003). In week 53, ending January 3, 2004, Kansas reported "Regional" influenza activity.

The number of states reporting widespread influenza activity continued to decrease during week 2 (January 11-17, 2004), with the majority of states reporting regional influenza activity. The percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza also decreased and the percentage of patient visits for influenza-like illness (ILI) declined again in all 9 surveillance regions. The national percentage of ILI (2.0%) declined below the national baseline of 2.5%.

Please see the CDC website <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/fluactivity.htm>. National results for week 3 should be posted on January 30, 2004 or soon after.

Laboratory tests have confirmed that primarily influenza type A (N3H2) viruses are circulating in Kansas this season. Recent testing by the CDC revealed that samples submitted by DHEL were similar to the Fujian strain circulating in the United States this season. Kansas's isolates were similar to the predominant (81.2%) strain of circulating influenza A. "Of the 565 influenza A (H3N2) isolates that have been characterized (in the United States), 106 (18.8%) were similar antigenically to the vaccine strain A/Panama/2007/99 (H3N2), and 459 (81.2%) were similar to the drift variant, A/Fujian/411/2002 (H3N2)" - CDC. Two infections from influenza type B have also been confirmed by a rapid test in the Southeastern part of the state.

KDHE strongly recommends flu shots for all high-risk individuals and everyone should be reminded to practice good respiratory etiquette i.e.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue every time you cough or sneeze and throw the used tissue in the waste basket
- If you don't have a tissue, sneeze or cough into the crook of your elbow
- After sneezing/coughing, always wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand cleaner
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Do not share eating utensils, drinking glasses, towels or other personal items.

If you have any questions about influenza activity in Kansas or wish to become a sentinel site for surveillance, please contact Daniel Neises (785) 296-5585 or Kathleen

Waters (785) 296-0028.